

Everyone has their own abilities and qualities that make them unique. Some are born with these qualities, some find them in their self-made circumstances, and others find their specialty in the midst of circumstances beyond their control. One quality that makes me who I am is my hard-working nature and the driving force behind it.

My lung disease, cystic fibrosis, motivates me to do well in the things that I can do. Because of this genetic disease, there are many elements in my life that I cannot control. My condition causes my cells to not release what comes into them. This unnatural process has made it where I must have two to three lung surgeries a year along with frequent sinus surgeries. It has also caused me to have to take enzymes every time I eat and has brought about a special type of diabetes because my pancreas is clogged off. Due to these diseases, my life is severely regulated. No matter how much medicine I take, I can't control my health; however, I have discovered that with enough determination, I can excel in areas that I do control such as school. For example, through blood, sweat, and tears, I have maintained a high-grade point average all the way through school. From kindergarten to my current time as a college sophomore, I have been on the all A's honor roll and then now on the dean's list. Completing activities that might not be a big deal to some are great victories to me because I have control over them and push through to achieve my goal.

A good example of how I have used my drive for success is when I decided to go on a school trip to Europe. When I was in the fifth grade, a lady came into my class and told about an upcoming overseas trip for middle and high school students to Rome, Paris, and London. My eyes lit up as she told the details of the enchanting far off places. After I listened to the woman's presentation and looked through the flyer, I wanted to make my dream of travelling to Paris come true more than ever. When I got home from school and excitedly told my mom about the trip, my hopes were diminished when she sadly explained that because of my many medical bills, she and my dad just didn't have the money. After seeing the look of utter disappointment on my face, she quickly that I could go if I could raise my own money for me and her to go. Because of my disease, I couldn't go alone and risk getting sick out of the country. "So, there is hope, but what can I sale to make money?" I thought of myself. After much pondering, I decided that I would make clay nativity sets like the one I had entered into the art fair the previous year. Over the next several months I worked afternoons, full weekend, and any spare time making my \$25.00 nativity sets. I toted them around with me everywhere and sold them to family and friends, as well as people at the bank, my school, and the hospital. Every month had a \$500 dollar payment but with hard work and elbow grease, the nativity sets funded the bill. When March came, I finally got to go on the trip of my dreams.

What makes me unique is that I have allowed my health drawbacks to push me to do my very best in other areas. Everyone has issues but it's what is done with them that matters. Instead of getting down about what I can't change, I decide to keep a positive attitude and strive for excellence. Without cystic fibrosis I wouldn't be who I am today, and I wouldn't have the will to persevere and try to achieve whatever I set my mind to.